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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the ways in which three tenth grade English teachers in a suburban school district established procedural and academic routines. Two classes of each teacher were videotaped for the first ten days of the school year. The teachers were selected because they taught students of comparable ability, and because they were confident enough of their own abilities that they would not be threatened by extensive observation. Thirteen categories of behavior were derived and used to compare the teachers, particularly in the following areas: (1) teachers' procedural statements; (2) teachers's statements concerning student behavior; (3) desists; and (4) student questions concerning procedure. Significant variance was found between the teachers, which could be explained by the differences in the kinds of learning activities used (lecture, seat-work, use of an overhead projector, and groupwork). However, analyses of the videotapes suggest that a major factor in the variance was the student expectation of the consequences of behavior that deviated from the prescribed routine. This was clearly seen in the way each teacher dealt with unauthorized talking. The conclusion is that teacher behavior during the first few class days has profound effect during later sessions. (FG)

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A Study of the Development of Classroom Routines and Academic Performance Expectations In Three Tenth Grade Classrooms

by

Reg Hinely
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Conventional wisdom has long recognized the need for structure and order in the secondary school classroom. Statements such as "Don't smile until Christmas" and "Start off hard, you can always ease up later on" are common advice to beginning teachers and this advice is an indicator of concern among teachers for controlling the flow of activities in the classroom. It is self-evident to anyone who has spent time in secondary schools that teachers vary widely in their ability to do whatever is necessary to create a productive and orderly class.

A body of research evidence is gradually being accumulated that attests to the importance of establishing classroom routines. To this point, most of the attention has been directed to the elementary school. Emmer and Evertson (1980) compared the beginning of school behaviors of two groups of teachers with initially comparable classes who were highly differentiated on their management effectiveness later in the school year. They found striking differences in initial behavior management activities.

> The more effective managers had a workable system of rules and procedures which they taught to their students during the first several weeks. They monitored their students carefully, and did not "turn them loose" without careful directions. They did not appear to treat inappropriate behavior differently than the less effective managers, but they stopped it sooner. Consequences of appropriate and unappropriate behavior were clearer in their classrooms and were applied more consistently. Thus these teachers established their credibility early and they were predictable. (Emmer & Evertson, 1980, p. 220.)

Yinger (1979) in his study of teacher planning, suggested that use of routines can increase the effectiveness of in-class time by increasing the stability of activities and therefore increasing their predictability and that the use of routines also reduces the time lost to interruption. Tikunoff and Ward observed three fourth grade teachers for seven weeks and found that much time was spent by these teachers on rule setting, in sanctioning behavior and in socializing the students into the teacher's system of rules and procedures. After reviewing research on classroom structuring and teacher methods, Evertson and Lambert (1977) concluded that an optimal amount of teacher control in classroom structuring would increase time-on-task, decrease time wasted through misbehavior and organizational activities and thus increase student achievement.

At the junior high school level Markowitz and Hayman (1976) compared beginning teachers with teachers voted "best" by students. The differences found between the two groups were establishment of control at the beginning of the school year, setting of expectations, academic reinforcement and behavior control. Using data obtained in the Junior High Classroom Organization Study, Sanford and Evertson (1980) did case studies of three teachers selected because of their varying managerial effectiveness and found differences in the areas of teaching rules and procedures, consistency of enforcement and feedback, clarity, knowledge and understanding of students students' accountability for their work, time use and class routines, standards for student behavior and maintaining a leadership role. They stated that these findings are consistent with those of the larger study.

Purpose

The purpose of the present study is to describe some ways three tenth-grade English teachers in a suburban school district established procedural and academic routines at the beginning of a school year.

Procedures

Two classes of each of three teachers were video-taped for the first ten days of the school year. These teachers had been selected by the district's English consultaint according to criteria specified by the researchers. These criteria were that the teachers should be teaching the same subject at the same grade level to students of comparable ability and that they be confident enough of their own abilities that they would not be threatened by extensive observation during the first two weeks of the school year. The teachers selected were from the same building and their classrooms were all in the same area. One was the department chairperson and the chosen teachers taught from the same materials and often planned together. All three were rated by the consultant and the building principal as excellent teachers.

Since the study was exploratory in nature, no a priori system was established for the analysis of the video tapes. Doyle (1978) has suggested that looking for "regularities" - events that are repeated over and over - and "anomalies" - surprises, or events that don't seem to fit standard behavior patterns - is a useful way to discover the basic structure of a classroom. In order to determine if there were, indeed, differences among the three teachers in how they went about the process of establishing content and procedural routine the tapes were viewed in sequence. That is, all three teachers' first day tapes were examined, then their second day, etc.

From this first, impressionistic, analysis it was apparent that there were differences not only in how these three teachers conducted their classes, but in the resultant teacher-student relationships and overall class climate. From this initial analysis thirteen relatively defined categories of behaviors were derived. These categories of behavior are described below.

A. Teacher Talk

1. Procedural - All statements by the teacher telling students how to do something related to routine or to content. This included such things as filling out attendance cards, heading on papers, doing assignments, etc.
2. Content - All statements and questions about content that were instructional rather than procedural.
3. Behavior - All statements concerned with acceptable and unacceptable behavior in the classroom such as respect for property, raising hands, tardies, etc.
4. Desists - Teacher statements and/or actions designed to halt or to reprimand students for unacceptable behavior.
5. Accountability - Statements by the teacher that indicate the things for which the students would be held responsible.

B. Student Talk

1. Procedure - Student questions or comments concerning procedures to be followed.
2. Content - Student questions or comments about content.

C. Interactions

1. Teacher-initiated interactions with an individual student.
2. Student-initiated interaction with the teacher.

D. Activities

1. Seat Work-Procedure - Students working at their desk on some task not related to content. Examples would be filling out attendance records, covering text books, filing papers in notebooks, etc.
2. Seat work related to content.
3. Group work.
4. No Task - Students "just sitting," with no apparent assignment.

In order to reduce the sixty hours of videotaped data to more manageable form, each tape was viewed in five minute segments. At the end of each five minute period, the tape was stopped and a brief narrative was written with emphasis on these thirteen categories. In cases of uncertainty the tape was replayed to check the accuracy of the narrative. The final step in the data reduction process was to go through the written narratives, tallying each of the behaviors that occurred in each five minute segment.

What resulted was a time sampling of each of the categories that had been identified in the initial viewing. The percentages of the total of the five minute segment in which each of these behaviors appeared are presented in table I. It should be noted that this does not represent total amount of time or number of occurrences. This is simply a time sampling and whether the teacher made a brief comment about the procedure or whether she talked for the entire segment a single tally would be made. Several different categories of behavior could occur in a single segment. The average number of behavior categories per segment were 3.54 for teacher A, 3.09 for teacher B and 2.34 for teacher C.

Discussion

It is obvious that there was considerable variance in each of the thirteen behavior categories. Much of this variance can be explained by differences in the kind of learning activities used. The predominant learning activity used by teacher A was a kind of lecture - recitation based almost exclusively on the exercises in the textbook. This was supplemented by some seatwork, once again usually taken from the textbook. Teacher B made much use of the overhead projector as a focal point for instruction. Her assignments, while covering the same general content as teacher A, consisted of having students generate words and original sentences. Within the first week she had students critiquing each

Table 1

Teacher	Total 5 Min. Segments	TP	TO	TB	D	Ac	Sp	It	Is	SUP	SWC	GP	NT
A	67	75%	40%	25%	34%	06%	46%	24%	28%	07%	22%	00%	19%
B	70	71%	30%	13%	11%	17%	11%	47%	11%	24%	36%	10%	19%
C	90	51%	14%	03%	06%	07%	10%	31%	26%	13%	64%	00%	07%

others' work in pairs and moved from there into group work. Teacher C relied almost exclusively on seatwork, some of which was directed toward answering opinion questions, some focused on content related worksheets and some on reading assignments.

Since the focus of this study was to describe how teachers establish procedural routines, the categories of particular interest were: (1) teachers' procedural statements, (2) teachers' statements concerning student behavior; (3) desists, and (4) student questions concerning procedure. Differences among the classrooms in each of these behaviors are presented below.

One key for determining each teacher's success in establishing routines was the category of desists. Though no inferential statistics were used, the percentage of segments in which the teacher desisted students one or more times was quite different. Not only did the numbers of desists vary but there was an obvious qualitative difference in the nature and length of desists. Of the eight segments in which teacher B desisted students all but one consisted of a relatively soft "sh." For teacher C the five desists consisted of 2 "sh's," 2 non-verbal desists and one reprimand. Teacher A's desists were longer; several times there was more than one desist per segment and many of the desists were characterized by threats. For example, on the first day, "Ladies control yourselves in the back," on the second day "Gentlemen, and this does not refer to all of you, I will have it quiet when you come in here. If not, you will not be going to lunch." Later in the week, "I don't think you all understand. I'm not going to put up with this noise - not at all - not one bit." Unlike teachers B and C the number of segments in which desists occurred in teacher A;s class did not decrease with the passage of time.

Repeated viewings of the tapes suggested that the differences found in the behaviors of the students as measured by the number of desists could be explained by differences in the categories of teacher procedural statements and student

procedural questions. Teacher C ahd fewer segments in which she made procedural statements. This is accounted for primarily by the preponderence of seatwork activity in her class. The nature of her procedural statements were quite similar to those of teacher B and so the discussion that follows will deal primarily with the qualitative differences between the procedural comments of teachers A and B.

It will be noted that during this first two weeks of school both teachers A and B made procedural statements - gave some direction or instruction about how to do things - in three out of every four segments. Therefore, if procedural statements explain some of the differences in classroom behavior among these classes the differences would have to be in the quality rather than the quantity of the statements. The procedural statements of teacher B seemed to be characterized by clarity, detail, rationale, and accountability. An example can be found on the very first day of class. The teacher told the students that they must buy a loose leaf notebook for their English class. She explained why it must be loose leaf rather than spiral and held up a notebook as an example. She told the students that all classwork must be kept in the notebook and must be in chronological order. The notebook was to be taken up each six weeks and would count as a daily grade. She told the students that everyone could make an A+ on the notebook if they just put papers in each day. On the last day of tapes (the tenth day of class) the teacher took a part of the class period to check the students' notebooks, to tell them everything that should be in it, the proper order of papers and how to make corrections on papers. As an example of the details of organization, students were to make their corrections on a clean sheet of paper so that when the corrections were put in the notebook they would be facing the original paper and the teacher would not have to turn the page to check the corrections. A total of about fifteen minutes was spent on explanation and practice on notebook procedures.

In contrast, when teacher A was going over school policies, she told students that the policies book was to be put in their notebook. At that point she explained that they were to buy a loose leaf notebook for their English class. The entire explanation lasted less than 15 seconds. Several times in the remaining nine class days the teacher would say that an assignment was to be put in the notebook but no systematic explanation of the purpose of the notebook or the kinds of things to go in it was given.

One other example will illustrate the difference in procedure, this time with a content assignment on day 4. Teacher B followed her usual procedure of walking around the classroom as she talked. She told students to get out a clean sheet of paper, put a full heading, and title the paper "Noun List." She turned on an overhead projector that contained the instructions, along with several categories into which nouns could be placed. Examples of categories included: places where you would rather be right now, things I can see from my window, and so forth. She told students to select four categories and write five nouns in each of the categories. She reminded them to watch their spelling and capitalization and told them to use a dictionary if there was any doubt. Students began working on the assignment with no questions. The teacher interrupted in a few minutes to tell the students that they were to bring these noun lists to class the next day, and, since it was time for the bell, they were to get ready to leave. The next day, the teacher pointed at pairs of students and told them that they were partners. She then told them to trade noun lists with their partner and to classify each noun as common, proper, abstract, telling whether or not the noun was compound. They were to write the classification beside the noun. One student asked a procedural question and the teacher explained and gave an example. With no more questions students began to work.

In contrast, teacher A gave a homework assignment on the third day of class. Repeated viewings of the tape did not provide a clear understanding of the nature of the assignment. The students were to write some kinds of composition containing descriptive adjectives. There were numerous procedural questions from the students during the next two five-minute segments. These included: "What should we write on?", "Do you want a paragraph or just sentences?", "Do you want us to underline the adjectives?", "Is this to be done tonight?", etc.

Discussion

Three teachers in very similar teaching situations exhibited pronounced differences in the procedures and routines they established for teaching tenth grade English. The quantative data, while they highlight some of these differences, are insufficient to explain the differential effects as indicated by the differences among the teachers with respect to the number of desists and statements about behavior. When combined with a qualitative analysis the data at least suggest some hypotheses about the establishment of classroom routines at the senior high school level.

Good (1977), Mehan (1974), Yinger (1979), and others have documented the emphasis placed on the establishment of routines in the early elementary school. The Texas Junior High School studies (Sanford & Evertson, 1980) have shown that middle or junior high school teachers also spend time teaching routines. The data from this study suggest that there may be little actual <u>teaching</u> of routines in the senior high school. With the exception of teacher B's instruction and practice in procedures for putting papers in a notebook and making corrections on these papers, there was no planned instruction on routines. All three teachers told the students their expectations concerning hand raising, entering the room, leaving the room, passing in papers, headings, etc., but

it was done in such a way as to suggest that they assumed that the students already knew the routines and that they were simply reminding them of them.

High school teachers may assume that the students entering their classes at the beginning of the year have had from eight to eleven years of instruction and practice in classroom behavior patterns and therefore they simply need to be told which particular behaviors are expected in this class. If this assumption on the part of the teacher is correct, then the differential behavior patterns found in the three classes in this study would have to be explained by some factor or factors unique to that class. The possible explanations could be a difference in the nature of the students, a difference in the way of telling, or a difference in the students expectations of the consequences of inappropriate behavior patterns.

There was nothing in the student assignment plan at that school that would lead to wide differences among students assigned to the three teachers. The teachers spent approximately the same amount of time during the first two days going over behavior and activity routines. There were, however, differences in how the teachers went about the telling process. Teacher A went very rapidly through the school student handbook, reading sections, stressing some as being important in her room. She then used the same process for her own expectations, covering several potentially important routines in a single five minute segment. During the remainder of the two weeks, as a new routine such as headings on papers, handing in papers, etc. was introduced it was given the same cursory treatment. She frequently used threats such as detention, lowered grades, etc. for failure to conform to the prescribed behavior.

By contrast, teacher B's presentation of classroom procedures was characterized by organization and specificity. Each academic procedural routine was explained at length, illustrations were used, and the reasons for the particular

routine were given. Students were given a handout explaining the routines and were frequently reminded during the weeks to follow the prescribed procedures.

Teacher C dictated her expectations to the students and they were then placed in the students' notebook. Of the three, she spent the least amount of time explaining routines during the two weeks but had the fewest questions from students about procedures. Her explanations were clear but they were not as specific as those of teacher B.

Analyses of the tapes suggest that a major factor accounting for the differences in the three classes was the student expectation of the consequences of behavior that deviated from the prescribed routines. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the way in which the three teachers managed unauthorized talking. Teacher B required students to raise their hands if they wished to say something to another student. On the second day of class, a girl was talking to her neighbor across the aisle. The teacher asked her if she wished to say something. The student said no and stopped talking. Almost immediately she started talking again. The teacher went to the student's desk and talked quietly to her for a while. The conversation was inaudible on the tape, but it was clear that the student's talking was the subject of the conversation. This student was not called down for talking again during the two weeks. This teacher was the only one who used group work activities during the observational period and the talking in these activities was quiet and required only two mild desists.

On the first day of school, teacher A stated that there would be no unauthorized talking in her class. Many times during the remainder of the taped classes she called down students and the entire class. Statements such as "I will not have thks talking" and "If you want to go to lunch you had better get quiet" were made frequently. Threats often accompanied the desists. Her class had the most unauthorized talking and there was no apparent lessening of the amount or volume with the passage of time.

Teacher C made no statement to the class about unauthorized talking. In fact, about five minutes before the end of class on the first day she told the students that since they had probably not had a chance to visit with their friends that they could use this time for that purpose. Unlike the other two classes there was usually a buzz of conversation at the beginning of a class and the teacher gave no discernable signal that she was ready for class to begin. Occasionally students would say "sh" when they percieved that class was about to start. Just before the teacher began to talk students stopped talking. They did not talk while the teacher was talking. However, during seatwork it was not unusual to see two or more students talking quietly. It was apparent that the teacher was aware of the talking, but she apparently did not perceive it as unauthorized.

Whether students accept and abide by the academic and procedural routines that a teacher attempts to establish appears, then, to be a function of a variety of factors. Among those factors are the clarity and specificity with which the routines are presented, the quality of individual interpersonal contacts between teacher and students, and the history of certain accountability for violating procedural routines.

Teacher B appeared to have excellent rapport with the students. She smiled and joked, but at the same time she communicated to the students that they were there to work and that the consequence of failure to comply were serious. Students came into her room and began copying the assignment from the board even before the tardy bell rang. She constantly roamed the room, stopping and talking with individual students at their desks. Her assignments were very detailed and students knew what they would be accountable for. There was very little unauthorized talking even when students had finished an assignment and had nothing to do. She was able to conduct complicated teaching strategies with a minimum of confusion.

Teacher C had a very quiet voice which she never raised. She, too, moved about the room and initiated many contacts with individual students. Her teaching procedures consisted primarily of seatwork activities, many of which lasted all period. The attitude of the students appeared to be that they would never think of not doing what Mrs. C told them to do. The climate in her class was much more relaxed than either of the other two and there was much more non-content interaction in her class during down time. Her directions to the students were less specific, probably due to the simple nature of many of the activities.

Teacher A appeared to put the most effort into the establishment of routines with the least success. Students often were confused about what they were to do. This confusion resulted in many questions and an increase in the amount of time it took to get an activity started. She seldom left the front of the room and most of her contacts with individual students were initiated by the student rather than the teacher. There was tension in the room much of the time. Threats and arguments between students and teacher were not uncommon.

Conclusions

The data from this study suggest that the conventional wisdom referred to in the opening paragraph is both true and false. What teachers do during the first few class days appears to have profound effects during later class sessions. Whether teachers smile or talk tough, however, does not appear to be critical behaviors. Teacher A almost never smiled and frequently issued dire threats and yet her class had by far the greatest amount of deviant behavior.

Secondary school classrooms are in many ways simpler than elementary classrooms. They are characterized by whole group instruction and seldom use differentiated activities. Students have learned nearly all of the routines and procedures needed and it is only some variation of these that needs to be taught. The ability to describe clearly the specific routines to be used, to

plan and implement activities that involve the student, and to communicate unambiguously to students the teacher's expectations for behavior seems to be an essential prerequisite for a class that runs smoothly and efficiently.

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